

It is perhaps because I am also an objector (although within an imperial power now growing impotent and merely tetchy) that Staughton has done me the honour to invite me to put some words down here. At first I thought that our common objectionableness—our brotherhood in the shadowy international of revolutionary humanism—was scarcely relevant to the matter on hand. After all, Staughton appears here as Professor Lynd: not in his person as an arch-seditionist or arsonist (or whatever the mutton-fisted narks of academe suppose) but simply as a master of his chosen trade. And although we are both of the same trade, we deal in such different and highly-specialised branches that it seemed beyond my competence to offer comment on much of the detail in his intricately-wrought historical argument.

As a fellow-tradesman I can, of course, see that the workmanship in these pages is of the first order: the command of the subject assured: the argument open, sinewy, and challenging an open response: the texture scrupulous as to detail and yet impatient of marginalia, insistent upon essentials. It is the large kind of historical argument, which demands the total attention of the intellect. We are not “carried along” by Professor Lynd or snowed by the choice flowers of his rhetoric: he asks, all the time, that we stay with him and reason with him. Moreover, he does not waft around us some attenuated “climate of ideas”: he immerses us within particular, and significant, historical contexts and demands that we think in actualities. And this seems to me to be the primary discipline of history (and the one which distinguishes it from sociology): the discipline of context.

I can see also that every chapter of this book is locked into the next, in such a way that the total argument presented both draws upon and feeds strength back into each part. Some parts arise from original research while others arise from thinking about and connecting in new ways long-familiar sources and the recent research of colleagues. The old kinds of argument for and against Beard, over which generations of students have grown weary (and whose

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TEN ESSAYS

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Preface

Staughton Lynd is already known to many people outside the United States in his person as a responsible and alert internationalist—as a good citizen of that immanent, more rational world which must come into being if any world is to survive our time. This is to say that he is known, to those who are able to take a long and settled view, as a good American.

For some reason his kind of good American, who combines a Yankee energy and irreverence with a moral toughness which comes from older, more puritan, timber, has been seen around the campuses of the United States a good deal in the past few years.

It is only to be expected that such people will run into misrepresentation of various kinds. This generally awaits those who have the temerity to object within the heart of a swollen imperial consensus. Nor should this bother them much, since they know that it is one plain part of their business to *be* objectionable.